

January 20, 2013

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I request that you consider the following impacts in the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement:

- Air quality – how long and at what locations would the trains idle? How will air quality be effected by train idling? Is there an increased risk to people living along the train tracks (especially to children, the elderly, and people who have existing health problems such as asthma)? Will low income and minority communities be disproportionately affected by increased air emissions from additional train activity? How will air quality be affected by additional diesel ship traffic in Washington's waterways, including particulate pollution and acid rain-creating NOx and SOx?
- Traffic – how long and at what locations would traffic be delayed due to increased train traffic? Are there any communities that will be cut off from important emergency resources during train crossings (for example, are there any communities to which there are no alternate routes for emergency vehicles – for example the old Georgia Pacific site, once it is redeveloped)? Will increasing traffic of cargo trains increase trip times for Amtrak and other commuter rail traffic? If the existing rail lines are already operating at capacity, will new rail lines be built? If yes, where? If not, which trains will get priority to use the rails?
- Soils – portions of the rail line between Tacoma and Bellingham have experienced landslides; what will happen if these landslides occur when a train carrying coal is on the tracks?
- Water quality/aquatic environment – How will water quality be affected by increased rail traffic? Are there any sensitive aquatic environments in the area of the proposed terminal (such as eelgrass beds and other fish habitat)? If so, how will the proposed project affect these environments?
- Fisheries – in addition to fish habitat effects, how would the proposed terminal affect existing fish in the bay as well as the local commercial fishery?
- Wetlands – The area surrounding the existing Cherry Point refinery has many wetlands. How would the proposed terminal affect these wetlands? Are there wetlands on the proposed site of the terminal?
- Noise – studies have shown that noise (traffic noise, including train noise) has potential human health effects, including increased stress and risk of heart disease. (e.g., Stansfeld, Stephen; Haines, Mary; Brown, Bernadette. Noise and Health in the Urban Environment. 2011. Reviews on Environmental Health. Volume 15, Issue 1-2, Pages 43–82, ISSN (Online) 2191-0308, ISSN (Print) 0048-7554, DOI: 10.1515/REVEH.2000.15.1-2.43, May 2011) and World Health Organization. 2011. New evidence from WHO on health effects of traffic-related noise in Europe. Bonn and Copenhagen, 30 March 2011.) How will the project effect noise levels in areas surrounding the train tracks and the terminal?

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- Cultural – how would the proposed terminal affect the local tourism industry and northwest identity? Are there any cultural/religious native American sites in the vicinity of the proposed project? If so, how would these sites be effected if the proposed project is approved?
- Economy – how will construction of the proposed terminal affect local economies? How will the increasing rail traffic affect the redevelopment of the Georgia Pacific site in Bellingham? Will the trains going to the terminal get priority over other trains on the already at-capacity rail lines? Which businesses and communities would be affected? How much would property values of homes along the train tracks be reduced?
- Taxpayer investment – how much tax revenue would local, county and state governments receive if the proposed terminal is built? How much additional infrastructure would local, county and state governments be required to build if the proposed terminal is built? How much would these additional infrastructure project cost?
- Utilities – what are the utility (water, electricity, natural gas, etc.) requirements of the proposed terminal project? Would the terminal get lower rates for these utilities than existing businesses or individual consumers? How would increasing needs for these utilities effect rates and availability for other users?
- What ifs – what safety precautions would be taken to prevent train accidents, shipping accidents (including spills), etc. and what emergency response teams, equipment and infrastructure would be available to respond to these accidents? How much would these cost to taxpayers? If federal subsidies to companies involved with coal mining, transportation and sale are reduced or terminated, would the terminal still be economically feasible? What if the market price of coal decreased substantially? What would happen to the terminal if shipping of these commodities becomes economically infeasible?
- Climate change – how much will the increased mining, transportation and sale of coal from Montana and Wyoming through Idaho and Washington State to China increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the resultant global climate change?
- Cumulative impacts – what are the cumulative impacts if ALL proposed shipping terminals are built in the northwest? Cumulative effects should also include the environmental effects of the coal mining in Montana and Wyoming.

Alternatives should include:

- Alternative rail routes to avoid idling due to rail traffic reaching the maximum capacity of the rail lines. Alternative rail routes to avoid economic effects on the redevelopment of the Georgia Pacific site.
- Over or underpasses to provide access for emergency vehicles to areas that are cut off from hospitals/police station/ fire station due to rail lines.
- Terminal alternative that does not include coal as a commodity to be transported.
- Alternative with shorter trains to reduce traffic effects.
- Non-diesel shipping alternative, if one exists.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter.

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Sincerely,

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